

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

MC: JUN/34/75(ND)

SPEECH BY MR LIM KIM SAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT, AT THE COMMISSIONING PARADE OF OFFICER  
CADETS AT TAMAN JURONG CAMP ON 27 JUNE 1975 AT 1730 HOURS

I had the privilege of officiating at the completion of the 1st Artillery Officers' Course in January 1968.

Since then many changes have taken place. The Armed Forces have expanded. The training and courses have been adapted to local conditions and most of the teething problems of national service have been solved.

A most welcome and significant change is the change in attitude to national service - from one of suspicion and hostility to that of acceptance of national service. This is due mainly to a better understanding of National Service.

Young people today know better what to expect during their 2 or 2½ years training stint through contacts with previous batches of national servicemen, and better pre-national service exposure through participation during their school days in uniform groups such as the NCC. Better trained officers have also helped in no small measure to raise morale.

Even parents have accepted national service as a responsibility their children must discharge. Tearful scenes of parents seeing their children off for national service are now a thing of the past especially after they have seen the good that national service has done. Among other things, it has built up the physique of their children and given them a sense of discipline and orderliness. To the majority of parents, enlistments has now become as routine as registration for school.

The change of attitude is also reflected in the smarter turnout by national servicemen, less problematic and disciplinary cases and a general willingness of recruits to follow instructions.

You, our young men, have accepted national service as a fact of life, and are prepared to do your best to discharge your responsibility. As a result the competition to become officers is fierce and keen. This change of attitude from doing the least possible to doing your best has, in my opinion, been one of the greatest factors in improving efficiency and raising of morale of national servicemen.

Only the best among you will pass out as officers and it is only the best that can maintain and improve the quality of our Armed Forces.

I have great pleasure now in congratulating you on successfully passing out as Artillery Officers and wishing you every success in the noble duty of defending our independence.